# Social Cognition and Moral Development

# Syllabus

## EDHD 850
### Department of Human Development and Quantitative Methodology

Social cognition and moral judgment reflect complex social abilities that are necessary for human development. How do these abilities develop and emerge? This topic involves understanding moral judgment, others' intentions, theory of mind, goal directed behavior, intergroup attitudes, and group identity. When does a lack of these capacities become barriers for children in social contexts and what age related changes take place from early to late development?  How do concepts of fairness and justice emerge in development? What happens when fairness concepts collide with group identity and in-group biases?  What is the role of peers and parents in fostering (or inhibiting) this development? These questions are central for understanding the development of social cognition and moral development. Foundational and current empirical work will form the basis for class discussions.

***Course Requirements and Grading.*** Students will be required to give oral presentations, raise discussion questions, and write a research term paper which involves a review and a critical analysis of theoretical frameworks and current research findings. Grading will be as follows: 50% for oral presentations and weekly questions, and 50% for the paper.

***Course Structure and Readings.***  Each week the professor will provide a brief overview and background to the topic, followed by a critical group discussion of the readings from the *Handbook of Moral Development* (2014) and supplemental articles provided online. Students will take turns leading the class discussions. Student presentations will highlight current research and raise theoretical questions for discussion.

**Required Book** (available at the UMD bookstore and at Amazon):

Killen, M., & Smetana, J. G. (2014). ***Handbook of moral development, 2nd edition***. NY: Psychology Press.

***Course Objectives***. To help students:
- Gain knowledge about theory and research in social cognition and moral development.
- Understand the scientific method and acquire the ability to formulate research questions.

- Develop critical reading, writing, and presentational skills through reading assignments, writing assignments, group discussions of theoretical material, and class presentations of current research findings.

***Class Attendance***. Students should attend each class session, except in the case of illness and/or extenuating circumstances.  Please inform the instructor of missed absences with an explanation.

***Academic Dishonesty***.  It is assumed that all students understand the consequences of academic dishonesty at the University of Maryland.  If you do not, please consult the graduate catalog or course registration booklet to become familiar with how cheating, fabrication, facilitation of academic dishonesty, and plagiarism are defined by the University.

***Students with Disabilities***. If you are a student with a documented physical or learning disability, please contact me by the first week of class so that we can make arrangements for the necessary accommodations.

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| Aug 30 | **Introduction: Social Cognition, Morality, and Moral Development** |
| Sep 6 | **Concepts of Justice, Fairness, and Rights** |

Turiel, E. *Epistemology, Development, and Social Opposition.* Chapter 1

Turiel, E. Thought about actions in social domains: Morality, social conventions, and social interactions. *Cognitive Development, 23*, 136-154.

Presenters: _____

Sep 13              **Concepts of Justice, Fairness, and Rights**

Smetana, Jambon, & Ball. *Domain Approach to Children's Social and Moral Judgments,* Chapter 2

Smetana, J. G. (1985). Preschool children's conceptions of transgressions: The effects of varying moral and conventional domain-related attributes. *Developmental Psychology, 21*, 18-29.

Presenters: _____

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| Sep 20 | **Socialization, Conscience, and the Family** |

Helwig, Ruck, & Peterson-Badali, *Rights, Civil Liberties, and Democracy.* Chapter 3

Helwig, C. C., & Kim, S. (1999), Children's evaluations of decision-making procedures in peer, family, and school contexts. *Child Development, 70*, 502-512.

Presenters: _____

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| Sep 27 | **Emotions, Prosocial Behavior, and Aggression** |

Malti & Ongley. *The Development of Moral Emotions and Moral Reasoning*, Chapter 8.

The role of moral emotions in the development of children's sharing behavior. *Developmental Psychology, 50*, 1148-1159.

Presenters: _____

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| Oct 4 | **Culture, Cooperation, and Development** |

Vaish & Tomasello. *The Early Ontogeny of Human Cooperation and Morality*. Chapter 13

Engelmann, J.M., Herrmann, E., Rapp, D.J., & Tomasello, M. (2016). Young children (sometimes) do the right thing even when their peers do not. *Cognitive Development, 39*, 86-92.
Presenters: _____

CogScience Talk: Mina Cikara, Harvard University
3:30 – 5:30 pm, Bioscience Bldg 1103, "Leveraging Choice Architecture to Alter Social Preferences"

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| Oct 11 | **Emotions, Prosocial Behavior, and Aggression** |

Carlo, G. *The Development and Correlates of Prosocial Moral Behaviors*. Chpater 10

Carlo, G., Roesch, S.C., Knight, G.P., & Koller, S.H. (2001). *Applied Developmental Psychology, 22,* 559-579.

Presenters: _____

Oct 18          **Morality, Emotions, and Adversity**

Wainryb & Recchia, *Heterogeneity and Conflict*, Chapter 12

Shaw, L.A., & Wainryb, C. (2006). When victims don't cry:
Children's understanding of victimization, compliance, and
subversion. *Child Development, 77*, 1050-1062.

Presenters: _____

Oct 25          **Prejudice, Social Cognition, and Intergroup Attitudes**

Killen & Cooley. *Morality, Exclusion, and Prejudice*. Chapter
16

Malti, T., Killen, M., & Gasser, L. (2012). Social judgments
and emotion attributions about exclusion in Switzerland.
*Child Development, 83*, 697-711

Presenters: _____


Nov 1           **Prejudice, Social Cognition, and Theory of Mind**

Lagatutta & Weller. *Interrelations Between Theory of Mind
and Morality.* Chapter 18

Lagattuta, K.H., Elrod, N.M., & Kramer, H.J. (2016). How do
thoughts, emotions, and decisions align? A new way to
examine theory of mind during middle childhood and
beyond. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 149,*
116-133.

Presenters: _____


Nov 8           **Precursors to Morality: Infancy**

Wynn & Bloom. *The Moral Baby*. Chapter 20
Hamlin, J.K., Mahajan, N., Liberman, Z., & Wynn, K. (2013).
Not like me = bad: Infants prefer those who harm dissimilar
others. *Psychological Science, 24*, 589-594.

Presenters: _____

Nov 15          **Precursors to Morality: Comparative approaches**

Jensen & Silk. *Searching for the Evolutionary Roots of Human Morality.* Chapter 22

Jensen, K., Call, J., & Tomasello, M. (2007). Chimpanzees are vengeful but not spiteful. *PNAS, 104*, 13046-13050.

Presenters: _____

Nov 22          **THANKSGIVING DAY HOLIDAY**

NOV 29          **Moral Identity and the Personal Domain**

Nucci. *The Personal and the Moral.* Chapter 25

Hasebe, Y., Nucci, L.P., & Nucci, M.S. (2004). Parental control of the personal domain and adolescent symptoms of psychopathology: A cross-national study in the U.S. and Japan. *Child Development, 75*, 815-828.

Presenters: _____

Dec 6           **Final Research Presentations**

Presenters: _____

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